



Mandatory Standards for Sport Activities

Applicability

The following standards are issued under the Public Health Act Chapter 465 of the Laws of Malta. They apply to all sport activities in Malta during the COVID-19 pandemic, applicable from 12th March 2021.

The COVID-19 situation in Malta is such that we are experiencing a surge in cases, and targeted actions and a ban on risky activities has been implemented in an evidence-based manner with the aim of decreasing the risks of contagion. This is also in the light of more transmissible variants which are spreading in the community being responsible for the majority of the positive cases.

The risk of person-to-person transmission is currently high and is increased the closer one comes to other people, the amount of time spent near them, and the number of people one comes near. Physical distancing measures help mitigate this risk.

Route of transmission of SARS-Cov-2

The main route of transmission of SARS-Cov-2 is through respiratory droplets either by inhalation or deposition on mucosa. Another less likely route is through contact with contaminated objects (fomites), due to persistence of the virus on surfaces (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), 2020).

Exercise and SARS-Cov-2

The pattern of breathing during strenuous exercise changes such that there is an increase in both the volumes of air that is breathed in and out, and of the number of breaths taken per unit time. As the rate of breathing increases, the potential of spraying out infected droplets from someone who unknowingly has COVID-19 is higher than under normal circumstances, and the greater the distance such droplets can travel, thus the spread might be even more.

Research also suggests that due to strenuous exercise, as one breathes deeper, athletes exposed to virus particles would be more likely to inhale such particles and direct them to the lower areas of the lung. Intense



physical exercise in densely populated sports facilities has been related to increased risk for infection.

Incubation period

The average incubation period of Sars-Cov-2 is between 5 to 6 days, with a range of 2 to 14 days. The virus can also survive in the environment for up to 3 hours in aerosols, 4 hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard, and up to 3 days on plastic and stainless steel (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), 2020).

Organised Sport Activities Regulations.

As of Friday 12th March 2021, all organised sport activities are prohibited in line with LN 93 of 2021 The Organised Sport Activities Regulations.

This refers to sports activities and formal practice of sport which is organised and planned, and carried out by a sporting organisation such as an association, club or federation or a sporting event or activity, even when organised by an individual organiser or a group of organisers. Enforcement for a breach of the Organised Sport Activities Regulations is exercised against the representatives of the relevant sport organisation, organiser or group of organisers.

Standards for Sport Activities

The Superintendent of Public Health hereby orders that all sport activities, subject that these are not organised sport activities as outlined above, shall be held in accordance with the following standards:

- Recreational physical activity and sporting activity for the purpose of exercise and keeping fit can be carried out in groups of no more than 4 persons (unless they come from the same household) doing the activity together.
- Outdoor sporting and physical activity is permitted in group sizes which are limited by the number of Persons in Public Spaces (Amendment) Regulations, 2021. This currently allows a maximum of 4 people to gather in a public place at any one time.
- Indoor sporting and physical activity in private properties must abide with the same regulation as those in the Groups of Persons in Residential Properties Regulations.
- Contact between persons prohibited.



- Masks are to be worn at all times except during high intensity physical activity.
- Any form of competition is strictly prohibited.
- Sporting and physical activity must not be done in such a way as to have or attract any spectators.
- Permitted sporting and physical activities include:
 - Walking and Power walking
 - Jogging, running and athletic activity
 - Fitness and Dance with adequate social distancing of 2m between all persons
 - Cycling
 - Climbing
 - Horse Riding
 - Golf
 - Tennis / Padel
 - Shooting
 - Swimming
 - Sailing on individual dinghies; or on larger boats in which case only persons from not more than four households can be on board at any one time.
 - Archery
 - Fishing
 - Gymnastics
 - Motor Sport
 - Model aircrafts
 - Scuba diving
 - Skateboarding
 - Surfing
 - Weightlifting
 - Beach volley
 - Bowling
 - Rowing
 - Canoeing

All recreational physical and sporting activities must comply with any other legislation at all times.



National Maltese Sport Teams

The Superintendent for public health may, in her discretion and subject to any conditions she may impose, exempt, from the Organised Sport Activities Regulations, national Maltese sport teams in relation to international games.